



NORTHWEST FIRE DISTRICT

Our Mission is to Save Lives, Protect Property, and Care for Our Community

PHONE: (520) 887-1010 FAX: (520) 887-1034 NWFDaz.gov



Fire District Governing Board Regular Meeting Minutes April 26, 2022

1. **Call to Order/Roll Call/Affirmation of Quorum**

Present: George Carter, Chairman
Bruce A. Kaplan, Vice Chair
David Talas, Board Member
Peg Green, Clerk
Cyndell Chanek, Board Member

2. **Salute to the Flag of the United States of America**

Chairman Carter led the Pledge of Allegiance to the flag.

3. **Presentation of Service Awards**

A. Announcement of "Best of the Northwest 2022" Acknowledgement

Assistant Chief of Administration Services, Scott Hamblen, announced that the District was recently named the Best First Responder Agency in the "Best of the Northwest 2022", hosted by Tucson Local Media. He stated that the recognition was a direct reflection of each member of the District upholding the mission. He noted that the voters were community members and those that the District serves on a daily basis. Chairman Carter thanked and congratulated all members of the District.

4. **Public Forum**

Michael Schindler, President of Local 3572, read a statement to the Board regarding the upcoming performance appraisal for Chief Bradley. Schindler stated that through Chief Bradley's vision and strategic leadership, the District has become one of the most reputable fire districts in the state. He emphasized that the District's Command Staff is a direct reflection of Chief Bradley's leadership and stated that they are exceptional. He stated that now more than ever, the District's mission was being upheld and exceeding expectations. He asked the Board to take the statement made on behalf of the members Local 3572 into consideration when performing Bradley's performance appraisal. Chairman Carter thanked Schindler and said that the Board would take it into consideration.

5. **Consent Agenda**

The Consent Agenda contains items which might require action by the Board, but which are generally routine items not requiring Board discussion. Usually, a single motion will approve all items on the Consent Agenda, including any resolutions. However, a Board Member may remove any item from the Consent Agenda, and that item will be discussed and voted upon separately.

Approval of Consent Agenda

MOVE TO APPROVE ITEMS A THROUGH Q ON THE APRIL 2022, CONSENT AGENDA AS PRESENTED

Motioned by Chairman George Carter, seconded by Clerk Peg Green

Vote: 5 - 0 - Unanimously

- A. Approval of Minutes of the March 18, 2022, Budget Study Session

Motioned by Chairman George Carter, seconded by Clerk Peg Green

Vote: 5 - 0 - Unanimously

- B. Approval of the Minutes of the March 22, 2022, Regular Meeting, Including the Executive Session minutes

Motioned by Chairman George Carter, seconded by Clerk Peg Green

Vote: 5 - 0 - Unanimously

- C. Adoption of Resolution No. 2022-021 Ordering the Integrity Homes LLC Annexation, Pursuant to A.R.S. Section 48-262(I); the Annexation Area is Located at 13470 N Sandra Road (Parcel 218-44-029A) and is North of Moore Road and West of Dove Mountain Boulevard in Marana, Pima County, Arizona

Motioned by Chairman George Carter, seconded by Clerk Peg Green

Vote: 5 - 0 - Unanimously

- D. Adoption of Resolution No. 2022-013 Approving the Intergovernmental Agreement Between the Northwest Fire District and the Pima Joint Technical Education District (JTED) for Support of High School Fire Science Programs

Motioned by Chairman George Carter, seconded by Clerk Peg Green

Vote: 5 - 0 - Unanimously

- E. Adoption of Resolution No. 2022-014 Approving the Fourth Amended Intergovernmental Agreement for Fire Marshal, Fire Inspection, Fire Investigation, Code Consultation, and Plans Review Services Between the Rincon Valley Fire District and the Northwest Fire District

Motioned by Chairman George Carter, seconded by Clerk Peg Green

Vote: 5 - 0 - Unanimously

- F. Adoption of Resolution No. 2022-016 Approving the Intergovernmental Agreement with Avra Valley Fire District for Dispatch Services

Motioned by Chairman George Carter, seconded by Clerk Peg Green

Vote: 5 - 0 - Unanimously

- G. Adoption of Resolution No. 2022-017 Approving the Intergovernmental Agreement with Picture Rocks Fire District for Dispatch Services

Motioned by Chairman George Carter, seconded by Clerk Peg Green

Vote: 5 - 0 - Unanimously

- H. Adoption of Resolution No. 2022-018 Approving the Intergovernmental Agreement with Three Points Fire District for Dispatch Services

Motioned by Chairman George Carter, seconded by Clerk Peg Green

Vote: 5 - 0 - Unanimously

- I. Adoption of Resolution No. 2022-019 Approving the Intergovernmental Agreement with Rincon Valley Fire District for Dispatch Services

Motioned by Chairman George Carter, seconded by Clerk Peg Green

Vote: 5 - 0 - Unanimously

- J. Adoption of Resolution No. 2022-020 Approving the Intergovernmental Agreement with Mount Lemmon Fire District for Dispatch Services

Motioned by Chairman George Carter, seconded by Clerk Peg Green

Vote: 5 - 0 - Unanimously

- K. Adoption of Resolution No. 2022-022 Calling for the Election of Two Governing Board Member Positions as Part of the November 8, 2022, General Election

Motioned by Chairman George Carter, seconded by Clerk Peg Green

Vote: 5 - 0 - Unanimously

- L. Approving the Submittal of a Grant Amendment to FEMA to Expend the Remaining Balance of the 2019 Assistance to Firefighters Grant (AFG) for Radio Equipment

Motioned by Chairman George Carter, seconded by Clerk Peg Green

Vote: 5 - 0 - Unanimously

- M. Approval of KME Specification Modification to Upgrade the Bauer Breathing Air Compressor from a 13 Cubic Feet Minute (CFM) Compressor to a Bauer 18.1 CFM Compressor at a Cost of \$21,300.86

Motioned by Chairman George Carter, seconded by Clerk Peg Green

Vote: 5 - 0 - Unanimously

- N. Approval to Amend Contract for Request for Proposals (RFP) No. 20-07-C24 Regarding Annual Physical Exams

Motioned by Chairman George Carter, seconded by Clerk Peg Green

Vote: 5 - 0 - Unanimously

- O. Approval to Award Invitation for Bid (IFB) No. 22-11-C27 Regarding Draeger SCBA Equipment and Supplies

Motioned by Chairman George Carter, seconded by Clerk Peg Green

Vote: 5 - 0 - Unanimously

- P. Approval to Award Request for Qualifications (RFQ) No. 23-01-27 Regarding Insurance Broker/Consulting Services for Employee Benefits

Motioned by Chairman George Carter, seconded by Clerk Peg Green

Vote: 5 - 0 - Unanimously

- Q. Approval of the Architecton Change Order #2 for Additional Architectural and Engineering Services for the Northwest Fire Administration Complex

Motioned by Chairman George Carter, seconded by Clerk Peg Green

Vote: 5 - 0 - Unanimously

6. **Fire Chief's Report**

Assistant Chief Hamblen stated that the reports were included in the packet. Staff was available to answer questions. There were no questions.

- A. Fire Chief's Board Report
- B. Essential Services Board Report
- C. Operational Services Board Report
- D. Human Resource Services Board Report
- E. Administration Services Board Report

7. **Financial Reports**

- A. Finance Reports

The monthly reports were included in the packet. Kim Sotomayor, Business Services Director, presented financial reports that covered the period ending March 2022. She reported that General Fund expenses were \$27.4 million, in comparison with \$27.3 million in March 2021. She noted that the differences could be attributed to COVID-19 related expenses the previous year and inflationary expenses in the current year. General Fund revenues were \$26.5 million, compared to March 2021 which were \$24.4 million.

Sotomayor reported that property tax collections were at 65.6% of the budgeted collections. She reported that ambulance revenues were \$2.1 million year-to-date, all capital projects were progressing, pooled cash accounts were in balance, bank statements were reconciled, and all funds had a positive fund balance. She made herself available for questions. There were no questions.

MOVE TO APPROVE THE DISTRICT'S MARCH 2022 DISBURSEMENTS REPORT, AS PRESENTED.

Motioned by Chairman George Carter, seconded by Board Member David Talas

Vote: 5 - 0 - Unanimously

8. **Business**

- A. Presentation from Medical Director Dr. Amber Rice Regarding the PediDOSE Study that the District Will be Participating in and Presentation of Code Save Awards

Dr. Amber Rice, Northwest Fire District Medical Director, provided a presentation on a study the District was selected to participate in. She explained that it was a multi-city and multi-center study and added that it was an honor to participate as only top, high-performing fire districts and departments are asked to participate. Dr. Rice explained that the purpose of the study was to improve pediatric seizure treatment in the pre-hospital setting. She reported that 10-12% of pediatric calls are seizure related. The focus of the study was to get the correct doses and medications on board to pediatric patients sooner. One-third of pediatric patients are still having active seizures when they arrive to the ER; this can be attributed to the many steps in getting the proper dose of medications to a child in a timely manner. The study will change the seizure protocol for children. The first year will focus on children older than 16 months. Dosage will change based on the age of the child. The desired outcome of the intervention is to help children stop seizing before they arrive at the emergency department. The study is exempt from informed consent due to the nature of the illness, with the national Board monitoring the study.

Dr. Rice presented slides of other EMS participants in the study and a schedule of enrollment and explained that each agency would be randomized when starting the study. She stated that training was paid for by the study and advised that the link to the website was available in the packet. She made herself available for questions.

Chairman Carter asked if the link could be made available on the District's website. Dr. Rice said it could be. Vice-Chairman Kaplan commented that the study sounded very interesting and important. He asked if the study would implement changes in treatment or if it would study procedures. Dr. Rice replied that it would study a change in dosages and could change standardize doses for children. Kaplan asked if there would be an increased liability for the agencies participating. Rice replied that it shouldn't increase liability as the study was reviewed and approved at a local and national level. The

processes were very standardized and rigorous to ensure safety. Kaplan asked how prevalent seizures were in children. Rice commented that approximately 10% of EMS calls were for children with 1 out of 10 being seizure related.

Member Talas asked about the unit response and transport times. Dr. Rice responded that this information would be included in secondary data collection.

Dr. Amber Rice announced three Code Saves that took place at the end of 2021 and two that took place in 2022. She highlighted two calls including one on Christmas day and another involving a one-year-old child treated by a District Fire Inspector who was first on scene. Rice reported that in 2021 there were approximately 350 life years added back to the community due to Northwest Fire District Code Saves. She praised the performance of the personnel and made herself available for questions. There were no questions.

- B. Discussion and Possible Action Approving the Renewal Proposal from Volunteer Firemen's Insurance Services (VFIS) for Property and Casualty Insurance Through the District's Broker, The Mahoney Group, to be Effective May 1, 2022, Through April 30, 2023

Kim Sotomayor, Business Services Director, stated that the VFIS policy renewal reflected an 8% increase, with the total equaling \$189,996.00 compared to one year ago at \$174,000. Broker fees were unchanged at \$15,000. She explained that the primary increase factors were property, content, automatic escalations based on inflation (4%), more field full-time employees, new apparatus, and new equipment. She reported that Executive Staff evaluated 10 years of loss runs which showed more activity in the previous five years in categories such as towing and glass replacement. Sotomayor explained that changes were made to the policy to reduce the initial quoted renewal increase of 16%. Changes included adjusting property deductibles from \$1,000 to \$5,000, portable equipment deductibles to \$1,000 deductible, removing full glass coverage, and applying a value-based scale to auto deductibles. The changes resulted in an 8% savings, which was in line with other districts. She made herself available for questions.

Member Talas remarked that he was glad that it was looked at in detail and thanked her. Clerk Green added that it was very smart. Chairman Carter agreed and commented that he was glad to be more standardized compared to other districts.

MOVE TO APPROVE THE ACCEPTANCE OF THE VOLUNTEER FIREMEN'S INSURANCE SERVICES (VFIS) FOR PROPERTY AND CASUALTY INSURANCE IN THE AMOUNT OF \$189,996.00 PLUS A \$15,000 BROKER FEE TO BE EFFECTIVE MAY 1, 2022, THROUGH APRIL 30, 2023

Motioned by Chairman George Carter, seconded by Board Member Cyndell Chanek

Vote: 5 - 0 - Unanimously

- C. Discussion and Possible Action Approving the Renewal Agreement with Securis Insurance Pool, Inc. to Provide Workers' Compensation and Employer's Liability Insurance

Kim Sotomayor, Business Services Director, presented the renewal agreement with Securis Insurance Pool, Inc. which provides workers' compensation coverage for the District. She stated that the total estimate, effective July 1, was just over \$1.5 million. This included three separate components: rate per \$100 was increasing 109% (\$1.1 million) due to COVID and presumptive cancer claims. COVID was approximately \$6.5 million, and presumptive cancer claims were \$4 million for the entire pool. Additionally, there was a potential member assessment of \$3.7 million for the entire pool. The District's portion would be approximately \$359,000. She reported that the assessment would not be finalized until August or September and the numbers would be included in the upcoming budget. The final component was that third installment of capitalization funds. She reported that Securis was exploring ways to mitigate the cost such as grant funding and ARPA fund distribution. She made herself available for questions.

Vice Chairman Kaplan asked for details related to the member assessment. Sotomayor replied that minutes from the Securis meeting where that was discussed were not yet available, and explained more information would follow.

MOVE TO APPROVE THE RENEWAL AGREEMENT WITH SECURIS INSURANCE POOL, INC. TO PROVIDE WORKERS' COMPENSATION AND EMPLOYER'S LIABILITY INSURANCE

Motioned by Chairman George Carter, seconded by Vice Chair Bruce A. Kaplan

Vote: 5 - 0 - Unanimously

- D. Discussion and Possible Action Approving Proposed Five-Year Capital Improvement Program (CIP) for Fiscal Years Ending June 30, 2023 - June 30, 2027

Kim Sotomayor, Business Services Director, presented the five-year Capital Improvement Program for 2023-2027 that was included in the packet. She presented slides and noted that the beginning fund balance for fiscal year 2022-2023 was inclusive of the \$1.1 million sale of the former Administrative Building on Massingale Road. She also noted that the General Fund transfer was somewhat lower at \$1.3 million and said that several grants were applied for and the District would be required to have a match for those funds. Approximately \$400,000 would be transferred from the sale of the Massingale building to the grants fund. Also included were regular transfers to the reserve fund for pavement maintenance and cardiac monitors.

Sotomayor directed attention to a request for a Type 6 Engine estimated to cost \$300,000 to be paid for utilizing the Wildland Fund. She made herself available for questions. There were no questions.

MOVE TO APPROVE THE FY 2022-2023 CAPITAL IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM AS DISCUSSED

Motioned by Chairman George Carter, seconded by Board Member David Talas

Vote: 5 - 0 - Unanimously

- E. Request for Board Direction Concerning Preparation of the Tentative Fiscal Year 2022-2023 Budget, and Consideration of Potential Changes to the District's Property Tax Levy

Kim Sotomayor, Business Services Director, presented levy options based on the March Study Session. She explained that the numbers presented were inclusive of everything discussed at the Budget Study Session. She further explained that the shortfall was due to a variety of things including retirements, resignations, and inflation.

She then explained the District's Fund Balance Policy which included a recommendation to maintain 20% unassigned operating fund balance for contingency. General Operating revenues (Fund 100) include property taxes, FDAT fees, and IGAs. In 2017, the District fell slightly under the percentage at 18%, partly attributed to increased assessed values, expenses, and inflation which cause the District to chase a bigger number every year, making the 20% threshold difficult to achieve. She went on to say that the 2022 projections were based on information available through March. She noted that unassigned fund balances have no restrictions, unlike the Self-Insurance Fund or Wildland Fund, and can be used for emergencies and one-time capital purchases.

She reviewed information regarding how historical and pending legislation negatively impacted revenue. She explained that recent legislation decreasing the net assessed value of commercial property included an increase to the maximum tax rate, and the legislature stated their intent was for fire districts to offset the net assessed value reductions through a rate increase. Sotomayor reviewed the District's Pima County Levy Limit Worksheet, highlighting the current maximum allowable levy limit per statute. She presented several levy options per the Board's request. She noted that the breakeven point was an approximate 3-cent increase. She concluded the presentation with a summary of considerations for the Board including the anticipated shortfall of \$572,044 for fiscal year 2022-2023 and cost of inflationary increases in several areas. Long-term issues for consideration included the unassigned fund balance remaining below 20% policy threshold and continued reductions to Class One commercial property assessed values that would equal approximately \$2 million in reduced revenue by 2027. She made herself available for questions.

Chairman Carter remarked that he was glad to see considerations included. He said that historically residential increases were consumed by inflation and loss of revenue from commercial valuations. He recalled that having the fund balance reserve helped the District get through the last recession, noting that it was important to get to and continue to carry the 20% unassigned fund balance. He noted that the future is an unknown and the District was trying to stay ahead of any potential downturns.

Vice-Chairman Kaplan said that it seemed like the District's economic model was built on community growth and tax base growth, not sustainability and there was no way to change that. He noted that the District seemed to be creeping toward the rate cap and said that the legislature put the onus on the residential taxpayer to make up for shortfalls. He stated that betting on commercial growth to benefit everyone may not be realistic. He also said that he was not a fan of trying to get too far ahead as situations often change. He remarked that he felt that he was settling on Option 4, not too far ahead, but building contingency back up and making up for shortfalls.

Carter remarked that he was reviewing Options 2 and 4 and in talking to residents, they seemed comfortable with a \$30 annual tax increase.

Member Talas said that this type of decision was among the most difficult the Board had to make because the Board is the voice of the public. He noted that the Board historically tried to save money and use grants to avoid using taxpayer funds. However, if the District did not act quickly, it would be in a difficult position in the future. He echoed Carter's comments about using the 20% fund balance during the recession for large purchases and did not want the District to fall behind. Chairman Carter agreed. Talas commented that the District does much more than firefighting and that there are many changes in all areas from ten years prior, noting that it would be a disservice if membership was not supported, and their needs not met.

Clerk Green commended the staff on their efforts and smart decisions and stated that they had pinched pennies very well. She stated that she felt that community members understood the big picture. She explained that she tended to be conservative and was comfortable with Option 4 knowing that the District could make a substantial change the following year if needed.

Member Chanek remarked that she was leaning toward Option 3 as the District needed more contingency to maintain its level of service. Clerk Green noted that as a recipient of the District services, she felt the services were excellent and top-notch.

Carter remarked that though the District could not predict the future, it was trying to stay ahead of things. He preferred not to review the rate each year and wanted to stay two to three years ahead. Talas stated that he preferred Option 2. Chanek stated that they could agree that there was no light at the end of the tunnel regarding inflation; therefore, the more savings the better. Kaplan remarked that one thing to consider was that things change very quickly, and that inflation could ramp down. He noted that he preferred to maintain rates as much as possible. Carter responded that the Board was somewhat conservative and would rather not look at an increase each year.

Green asked for an educated guess regarding how long anticipated inflationary increases would last. Sotomayor replied that from a conservative financial perspective, she did not see inflation going down for the next 12-18 months and said it had increased since the March Budget Study Session. She also stated that the federal government was attempting rate increases but to date they had not had much of an impact. She stated that she gets concerned when unassigned fund balance was below the 20% threshold. She reported that GFOA recognizes 20% as a reasonable reserve to have available to help with a possible market correction.

Kaplan remarked that "first you go and then you know" explaining that it was not wise to get too far ahead of yourself when dealing with these types of issues. Sotomayor noted that the District was very good at being nimble and reacting to these situations. Talas commented that the Board had a history of talking through things and compromising, noting that he was still at Option 2. He stated that things could be refined and praised staff efforts but was concerned about reductions in resources despite those efforts. Carter agreed with his comments and commented that he was now almost at Option 1. Chanek remarked that she liked the idea of not having to discuss a rate increase for potentially three years and preferred Option 2.

MOVE TO APPROVE OPTION 2 FOR A POTENTIAL CHANGE TO THE TAX LEVY IN ORDER TO SET A PROPOSED BUDGET AT THE MAY 24, 2022 BOARD MEETING

Motioned by Chairman George Carter, seconded by Board Member Cyndell Chanek

Vote: 4 - 1

NAY: Vice Chair Bruce A. Kaplan

F. Discussion and Possible Action Approving Staff to Initiate the Performance Appraisal Process for the Fire Chief

Cherie Peltz, Human Resource Services Manager, presented the performance appraisal for Board Members to complete regarding Chief Bradley. She made herself available for questions. Carter stated that he preferred that the appraisal be sent out to each member, and they could sign the final report. Peltz noted that it could be sent through DocuSign to have all signatures and scores on one page.

Green asked if the form was the same one used in prior years. Peltz said that it was not, explaining that the form was updated to make it clearer and more concise. Kaplan commented that he liked the simplified format and felt it was important to get all signatures on one document. Peltz commented that in the past each member completed their own performance appraisal for the Chief. The District's Attorney, Thomas Benavidez, clarified that the Board could not collaborate on the appraisal until there was an actual meeting and said that each member would have their own input and evaluation. He also said that to comply with open meeting laws, joint documents were not permitted. Carter replied that he liked the format.

MOVE TO DIRECT STAFF TO DISTRIBUTE THE PERFORMANCE APPRAISAL FORM AND BRING THE MATTER BACK FOR ACTION AT NEXT MONTH'S BOARD MEETING

Motioned by Chairman George Carter, seconded by Vice Chair Bruce A. Kaplan

Vote: 5 - 0 - Unanimously

9. Future Agenda Items

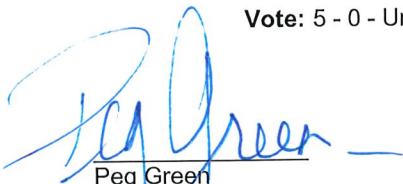
A Governing Board Member May Bring Forth General Topics for a Future Meeting Agenda. The Governing Board May Not Discuss, Deliberate or Take Any Action on the Topics Presented, Pursuant to A.R.S. § 38-431.02 (H).

10. Adjournment

MOVE TO ADJOURN THE MEETING AT 7:20 P.M.

Motioned by Chairman George Carter, seconded by Board Member David Talas

Vote: 5 - 0 - Unanimously



Peg Green
Board Clerk

Two Board Briefing Books containing material related to the Board Meeting are available for public review the day before and the day of the Board Meeting during office hours at the Administration/Prevention and Safety Office located at 5225 W. Massingale Road, Tucson, Arizona 85743 – (520) 887-1010. The two Board Briefing Books are also available for public review at the Board Meetings.

The Northwest Fire District Board may vote to go into Executive Session on any agenda item pursuant to ARS §38-431.03 (A)(3) for discussion and consultation for legal advice with the Fire District Attorney on the matter(s) as set forth in the agenda item. Pursuant to Board Policy, from time to time, it might be necessary for a Board Member to attend a Board meeting via speakerphone.

The Northwest Fire District Training Facility is accessible to persons with disabilities. In compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), those persons with special needs, such as large-type face print or other reasonable accommodations, may request those through Heather Robey, by calling 887- 1010, ext. 2929, before the meeting.

Posted 5-27-22